

Sexual Assault Prevention

Story by Bill Yamanaka

THE Department of Army is observing National Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April, with the DOD theme, “Sexual Assault Prevention Begins with You.”

Army leadership has repeatedly stated that sexual assault has no place in the Army, is contrary to Army values, degrades mission readiness and is a crime. During Sexual Assault Awareness Month, the Army will reinforce these points and the importance of its Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Program.

Implemented nearly 18 months ago, the Army’s SAPR Program has made tremendous progress, and continues to move forward to improve specific areas of the program and its related initiatives. Underreporting of sexual assault incidents and victims’ hesitation to seek help remain top concerns.


One of the Army’s goals is to

foster a command climate that encourages victims to report without fear or shame and seek help, allowing commanders to take appropriate action against offenders.

There is evidence that continued command emphasis on sexual assault prevention, combined with policy and training initiatives by both the Army and DOD, have helped Soldiers recognize that sexual assault as a crime that needs to be reported and have created more

of a willingness by some victims to report incidents.

Leaders at all levels are encouraged to use National Sexual Assault Awareness Month as an opportunity to talk openly to their Soldiers about this issue. Commanders can refer to the recently revised Army Command Policy (AR 600-20), which includes a new Chapter 8, “Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program,” that details the Army’s policy on sexual assault prevention and response. The Army regulation also provides guidance to Commanders on creating a climate that eliminates sexual assault and encourages the reporting of incidents.

The Army’s Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program Web site, www.sexualassault.army.mil, is another valuable resource. It contains a rich variety of educational material, including individual sexual assault prevention and response actions, lesson plans and links to other resources for use by leaders and Soldiers. 

“Soldiers must continue to live by the Army Values and treat each other with dignity and respect. By doing so, we will make great strides toward eliminating sexual assault in our Army,”
— SMA Kenneth Preston

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